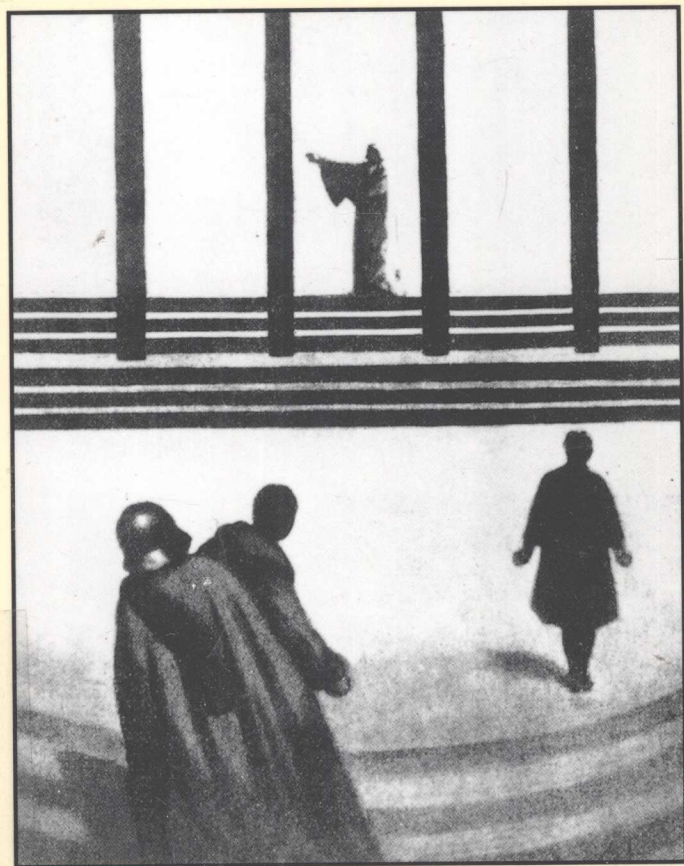


HAMLET

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



EDITED BY CYRUS HOY

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION
SECOND EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

William Shakespeare
HAMLET

AN AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUNDS
EXTRACTS FROM THE SOURCES
ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

SECOND EDITION

Edited by

CYRUS HOY

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

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Preface to the Second Edition

During the more than quarter of a century since this edition was first published, the text of *Hamlet* has continued to be a problem, and it always will be on the evidence that is currently available. Though the debate continues as to whether a modern edition of the play should be based on the second quarto (1604–5) or the first folio (1623), I persist in the belief that, all things considered, the second quarto provides the more authoritative text, and it remains the textual basis for this edition.

In preparing this revised Norton edition, I have been principally concerned with refining the punctuation and stage directions for the play, expanding the scope of the commentary notes on its language and action, and replacing certain of the critical pieces with materials that reflect some of the directions criticism of *Hamlet* has taken over the past three decades.

CYRUS HOY

Preface

Everything about *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is problematic. Critical uncertainty concerning the character of the Prince, his attitudes, and the tragic quality of his highly dramatic situation is matched by a corresponding diversity of scholarly opinion regarding such matters as the date of the play, its precise relation to its sources, and its textual authority. An editor approaches his task with a proper awe that is the more profound from his steady realization that he is, after all, dealing with the most celebrated work in English literature.

The present edition includes a text of the play in modern spelling, with explanatory and textual notes; extracts from the only two pre-Shakespearean treatments of the Hamlet story that are extant; a selection of late sixteenth-century opinion on four subjects—melancholy, demonology, the nature of man, and death—which, in one way or another, bear directly, and crucially, on the play's meaning; and a selection of critical commentary on the play, ranging in time from the early eighteenth century to the present.

The text of the present edition of *Hamlet* is based on that of the second quarto, published in 1604–5. Since there is good reason to suppose that the second quarto was printed from Shakespeare's own manuscript, its authority is very high, and I have adhered to it closely, but not slavishly. The second quarto of *Hamlet* is, unfortunately, a very carelessly printed book. It exhibits a number of obvious misreadings, and it is riddled with omissions of all sorts, from single letters to whole lines. In such cases, an editor must turn to other textual authority, usually to the text of the play printed in the 1623 folio collection of Shakespeare's complete works. The folio must be consulted as well for some 80 lines, scattered throughout the play, which are omitted from the second quarto. My editorial practices will be evident from the textual notes, printed after the play, where a complete list of all substantive departures from the text of the second quarto is given. The editorial problem that the play poses is summarized, together with an account of the principles which have governed the preparation of the present edition, in the Textual Commentary section.

The relevant portions of the Hamlet story as it is recorded in the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus and the *Histoires tragiques* of Belle-

forest are presented under the section dealing with Shakespeare's sources. In estimating the relevance of these to Shakespeare's tragedy, it is necessary to avoid either exaggerating or underestimating their importance. Since they provide us with the only pre-Shakespearean accounts of the story that are extant, their relevance to any serious study of the play is obvious. But they are sources of Shakespeare's tragedy only in an indirect sense. It is by no means certain that he knew either of them. Saxo's *Danish History*, written at the end of the twelfth century, was first printed in 1514, and had gone through a number of Continental editions by the end of the sixteenth century; but no edition is known to have been printed in England before or during Shakespeare's lifetime. Belleforest's *Tragicall Histories* present a roughly similar case. His account of Hamlet's story is contained in volume 5 of the *Histoires tragiques*, and this was widely printed on the Continent after its first edition in 1576, but there is no known English edition prior to Shakespeare's play. *The Historie of Hamblet*, an English translation of Belleforest, was published in 1608, five years after the appearance of the first edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This, far from influencing Shakespeare's treatment of the story, has in fact been influenced by it, as the anonymous translator's departures from his French text (to which attention is drawn in the note on page 139) make clear. The immediate source of Shakespeare's tragedy was an earlier *Hamlet* play, presumably the work of the dramatist Thomas Kyd, which is now lost, but which we know from contemporary references to it—in Nashe's preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), in Lodge's *Wit's Miserie* (1596), in Henslow's *Diary* (June 9, 1594)—was being acted on the London stage in the late 1580s and early 1590s. There has been much speculation concerning the nature of this lost play, and necessarily so. Between the *Hamlet* of Saxo and Belleforest, and the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare, a number of vast changes have been wrought, and the effort of critics to define the dramatist's intentions in this, the most ambiguous of all his tragedies, could proceed on very much surer ground if it were possible to know which of the changes were Shakespeare's own innovation, and which had already been introduced into the earlier dramatization of the *Hamlet* story. It is possible to conjecture something of the general features of the lost *Hamlet* play from the example of such other Elizabethan revenge plays as Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*; from *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (*Fratricide Punished*), a badly debased German version of what would appear to be Shakespeare's play but with traces of the *Ur-Hamlet*, carried to the Continent presumably by a touring company of English actors; and from certain elements in the remarkably garbled text of the first quarto (printed in 1603) of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But no amount of conjecture—clever and elaborate though much of it has been—can conceal the fact that the lost play is lost, and in the absence of it one must necessarily turn to Saxo and Belleforest in order to assess Shakespeare's source material.

Turning to them can be a salutary experience for the student of the play, if for no other reason than to witness just what an energetic fellow the Hamlet of the original saga is, by comparison with the highly introspective figure of the Prince which Shakespeare, or Shakespeare's critics, have made of him. It is only for the student to keep in mind the fact that, between the Hamlet story as it is narrated in Saxo and Belleforest, and as it is dramatized in Shakespeare's tragedy, there is a missing link, and that the action of the old saga had already been adapted to the conditions of the Elizabethan stage, and refashioned in accordance with the conventions of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, before Shakespeare took it in hand.

The selection of critical commentary contained in the present volume is designed to put before the reader at least the more significant of the multifarious opinions and attitudes to which the *Tragedy of Hamlet* has given rise over the past two and a half centuries. The play has never ceased to elicit and sustain critical attention, which is surely one measure of its greatness. A lesser work would have been exhausted long ago. For the early eighteenth century, the play posed no problem. The severest stricture that Dennis, writing in 1712, could level at it was its failure—which it shared with all Shakespeare's tragedies—to observe the law of poetic justice. For the anonymous author of *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736), the famous question of why the Prince delayed in avenging his father's murder, the answer was simple; if he had not delayed, there would have been no play. For the critics of the Romantic period, the play distinctly posed a problem; they isolated it in Hamlet's delay to action; and they found the explanation for his delay in the particular make-up of his nature. On these issues, critical discussion of the play has turned ever since, though the best recent criticism has stressed the need to look beyond the character of the Prince and to view the play in its totality.

Modern criticism of Shakespeare's plays has also drawn attention to the need to see them in the context of the moral and intellectual assumptions and attitudes that were current when they were composed. The selections from the writings of such figures as Lavater, Primaudaye, and Montaigne, included in the present volume, are designed to suggest something at least of the climate of late-Renaissance opinion as this would appear to have affected the conception of Shakespeare's treatment of the Hamlet story. The four subjects—melancholy, demonology, the nature of man, and death—on which I have focused attention here were, in their several ways, of absorbing interest to the late Renaissance, and each, in varying degrees, impinges on important issues raised by *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. The statements of Shakespeare's contemporaries on these matters warrant the attention of any serious student of the play. While it may be doubted whether or not knowledge of late sixteenth-century attitudes toward ghosts, or the physiological theory of the four

humors, will provide the key to the play's profoundest meanings, there is no doubt at all that the failure to understand the opinions of Shakespeare's age concerning such matters as these (and one might include the subject of revenge as well) can seriously impede the effort to deal with the play on its own terms. The unquiet spirit that haunts the play is, after all, the agent that sets the action in motion; and Hamlet's melancholy is both the cause and the effect of a pervasive sense of evil that is the very ambiance of the tragedy.

Questions concerning the nature of man, and the nature of death, carry us to the heart of the play. About the nature of man, the Renaissance was of two minds. The divergent views are recorded, among other places, in Primaudaye's *French Academy* and Montaigne's *Apology of Raymond Sebond*, selections from which are also reprinted below. They have come together, in Shakespeare, in such a passage as Hamlet's speech beginning "What a piece of work is a man" (II.ii.288ff.). Whether Shakespeare had read Montaigne when he wrote *Hamlet* has been much debated (Florio's translation appeared in the same year—1603—as the first edition of the play, but Shakespeare could have seen it in manuscript). The parallels of thought and language between *Hamlet* and Florio's rendition of the *Essais* are very striking, but positive proof of a direct influence at this point in Shakespeare's career is lacking. It does not finally matter. The identity of feeling and thought evident again and again in the essays and the tragedy is the important thing, however one accounts for it. The great passage on death, time, and change, at the end of the *Apology of Raymond Sebond*, might be spoken at any number of points in *Hamlet*. In effect, it is. "And nothing remaineth or ever continueth in one state," says Montaigne. "And nothing is at a like goodness still," says Claudius at one of the most impressive moments in the play (IV.vii.114). "If we should ever continue one and the same, how is it then that now we rejoice at one thing, and now at another?" asks Montaigne. "How comes it to pass we love things contrary, or we hate them * * *?" This is as much as to ask what Hamlet is agonizingly asking himself from the beginning of the play: how his mother could so readily transfer her affections from her Hyperionlike first husband to his satyrlike brother—a question that he puts to her directly in the course of the scene in her chamber ("Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed, / And batten on this moor?" [III.iv.67–68]). This is but a single demonstration, in a play that abounds with like examples, of the contradictory nature of reality as Montaigne defines it. He does so in terms of its most profound metaphysical implications—implications that take the form of a series of bewildering paradoxes.

How is it that we have different affections, holding no more the same sense in the same thought? For it is not likely that without

alteration we should take other passions, and *what admitteth alterations, continueth not the same*; and if it be not one selfsame, then is it not; but rather with being all one, the simple being doth also change, ever becoming other from other. And by consequence, nature's senses are deceived and lie falsely; taking what appeareth for what is; for want of truly knowing what it is that is.

The paradoxes are present in *Hamlet*, where they have been raised to the power of so many tragic truths: tragic because they point directly to as many appalling contradictions in the nature of things. Appearance contradicts reality, words contradict deeds, behavior contradicts purpose; nothing is what it appears to be, and nothing endures, least of all the high dedication of a passionate moment.

What to ourselves in passion we purpose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose. (III.ii.176-77)

Thus the Player King to the Player Queen, in answer to her loud protestations of eternal fidelity. If, in the context, the words reflect most immediately upon Gertrude, they reflect as well upon her son, who has also proposed something to himself in a fit of passion, just after his first encounter with the ghost. Ironically enough, it is the other King, the one of shreds and patches, who has the final comment on this matter, which involves nothing less than the need, so urgently felt by the tragic protagonist throughout the play, for suiting the action to the word, the word to the action.

That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this "would" changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,
And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh
That hurts by easing. (IV.vii.116-21)

Any modern editor of a Shakespearean play is heavily indebted to the work that has been done in the field of textual bibliography over the past half century. My own indebtedness to the work of the late W. W. Greg will be evident to anyone familiar with the problems of Elizabethan textual criticism. I have also laid under heavy contribution studies of the second quarto of *Hamlet* by F. T. Bowers and J. R. Brown, and of the folio text by Charlton Hinman and Harold Jenkins. Professor Jenkins's account of actors' interpolations in the folio text, to which reference is made in the notes and Textual Commentary, has been a source of continual enlightenment to me throughout the preparation of this edition. To him and it, I have a special obligation which I gratefully record. To the staffs of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., where

work on this edition was begun, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where it was completed, I wish to acknowledge my appreciation for many courtesies.

October 1962

CYRUS HOY

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T H E
Tragicall Historie of
H A M L E T,

Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakespeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much
again as it was, according to the true and perfect
Coppie.



AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his
shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in
Fleestreet. 1604.

[Dramatis Personae

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark.*
HAMLET, *son to the former and
nephew to the present King.*
POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain.*
HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet.*
LAERTES, *son to Polonius.*

VOLTEMAND,
CORNELIUS,
ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN,
OSRIC,
A GENTLEMAN,
A PRIEST. } *courtiers.*

MARCELLUS, } *officers.*
BERNARDO, }
FRANCISCO, *a soldier.*
REYNALDO, *servant to Polonius.*
PLAYERS.
TWO CLOWNS, *grave-diggers.*
FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway.*
A NORWEGIAN CAPTAIN.

ENGLISH AMBASSADORS.
GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark,
and mother of Hamlet.*
OPHELIA, *daughter to Polonius.*

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.

LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, SAILORS, MESSENGERS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

SCENE: *Denmark.*]

Hamlet

[I. i]

Enter BERNARDO and FRANCISCO, two sentinels.

BER. Who's there?

FRAN. Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BER. Long live the king!

FRAN. Bernardo?

BER. He.

FRAN. You come most carefully upon your hour.

BER. 'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRAN. For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BER. Have you had quiet guard?

FRAN. Not a mouse stirring.

BER. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

FRAN. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there?

HOR. Friends to this ground.

MAR. And liegemen to the Dane.

FRAN. Give you good night.

MAR. O, farewell, honest soldier!

Who hath relieved you?

FRAN. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night.

Exit FRANCISCO.

MAR. Holla, Bernardo!

BER. Say—

What, is Horatio there?

HOR. A piece of him.

BER. Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

HOR. What, has this thing appeared again to-night?

BER. I have seen nothing.

MAR. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.

[I. i] 13. rivals partners.

15. Dane King of Denmark.

Therefore I have entreated him along
 With us to watch the minutes of this night,
 That if again this apparition come,
 He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HOR. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BER. Sit down awhile, 30
 And let us once again assail your ears,
 That are so fortified against our story,
 What we have two nights seen.

HOR. Well, sit we down,
 And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BER. Last night of all, 35
 When yond same star that's westward from the pole
 Had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven
 Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
 The bell then beating one—

Enter GHOST.

MAR. Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again. 40

BER. In the same figure like the king that's dead.

MAR. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BER. Looks 'a not like the king? Mark it, Horatio.

HOR. Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

BER. It would be spoke to.

MAR. Question it, Horatio. 45

HOR. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night
 Together with that fair and warlike form
 In which the majesty of buried Denmark
 Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee, speak.

MAR. It is offended.

BER. See, it stalks away. 50

HOR. Stay. Speak, speak. I charge thee, speak. *Exit GHOST.*

MAR. 'Tis gone and will not answer.

BER. How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale.

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't? 55

HOR. Before my God, I might not this believe
 Without the sensible and true avouch
 Of mine own eyes.

MAR. Is it not like the king?

HOR. As thou art to thyself. 60
 Such was the very armor he had on
 When he the ambitious Norway combated.
 So frowned he once when, in an angry parle,

29. *approve* confirm.

36. *pole* polestar.

44. *harrows* afflicts, distresses.

48. *buried Denmark* the buried King of Denmark.

49. *sometimes* formerly.

57. *sensible* confirmed by one of the senses.

61. *Norway King* of Norway.

62. *parle* parley.

He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
 'Tis strange.

MAR. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
 With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch. 65

HOR. In what particular thought to work I know not,
 But in the gross and scope of mine opinion,
 This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MAR. Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows,
 Why this same strict and most observant watch
 So nightly toils the subject of the land,
 And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
 And foreign mart for implements of war;
 Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
 Does not divide the Sunday from the week. 75
 What might be toward that this sweaty haste
 Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day?
 Who is't that can inform me?

HOR. That can I.
 At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
 Whose image even but now appeared to us,
 Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,
 Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
 Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
 (For so this side of our known world esteemed him) 85
 Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a sealed compact
 Well ratified by law and heraldry,
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
 Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror;
 Against the which a moiety competent 90
 Was gaged by our king; which had returned
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same comart
 And carriage of the article designed,
 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras, 95
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
 Sharked up a list of lawless resolute
 For food and diet to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach in't; which is no other, 100

63. *sledded Polacks* the Poles mounted on sleds or sledges.

65. *jump* just, exactly.

68. *gross and scope* general drift.

72. *toils* causes to toil; *subject* people.

74. *mart* traffic, bargaining.

75. *impress* conscription.

77. *toward* imminent, impending.

83. *emulate* ambitious.

87. *heraldry* the law of arms, regulating tourna-

ments and state combats.

89. *seized* possessed.

90. *moiety competent* sufficient portion.

91. *gaged* pledged.

93. *comart* joint bargain.

94. *carriage* import.

96. *unimproved* unrestrained.

98. *Sharked up* picked up indiscriminately.

100. *stomach* spice of adventure.